

## **KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

### **STAFF NOTE**

#### **Review Item:**

Update on assessment work with the university system

#### **History/Background:**

***Existing Policy.*** The Kentucky Board of Education and the Kentucky Department of Education are bringing forward major improvements in Kentucky's assessment and accountability system. The redesign will result in a stronger state system with greater supports to districts and schools. The improvements have begun this year and will continue over the next few years. It is important that we develop greater in-state capacity by identifying and using the strengths of our partners. We need internal capacity to better use the talents and skills of our educators to adjust and alter our course of work as we learn, and to provide services in a cost efficient manner.

Over the last year, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) has conducted conversations with university officials on possible work they could perform relative to the state assessment and accountability system in the areas of formative assessments, item development, scaling and equating tasks, longitudinal assessment work, scoring of items, etc.

KDE is negotiating with the University of Kentucky Research Foundation for the performance of specified work/services. An agreement between the two entities would establish an Institute for Educational Assessment (IEA) at the University of Kentucky to perform ongoing work/services related to assessment including psychometric activities and formative assessment.

We have reached tentative agreement that this relationship is desirable and workable. KDE would coordinate all aspects of KDE involvement and provide oversight in all aspects of the University of Kentucky for work conducted including test item creation, psychometric analyses, vendor/contractor relationship management, etc. The University of Kentucky Research Foundation's IEA Liaison is Dr. Edward Kifer.

Initially, the IEA would: a) develop item banks and formative assessments in three content areas at specified grade levels—mathematics, grades 4, 5 and 8; reading, grades 4, 7 and 8; and, writing, grades 4 and 8; b) demonstrate the capacity to assume responsibility for the psychometric activities of CATS; and, c) produce a plan for the coordination and support of in-state scoring of constructed responses. It is the intent of both parties to develop the capacity to perform these and other functions related to assessment and in the future to expand the scope of work of the IEA.

Beyond this initial work, we have discussed increased cooperation that will emerge as the University of Kentucky develops its internal capacity and produces products, and as we see new needs arise.

Further, the Commissioner of Education and Deputy Commissioner of Learning and Results Services are engaged in conversations with all the public university deans about ways that higher education might support content specific P-16 conversations that would enhance/support diagnostic and summative assessments in Kentucky. We envision these content centers as being the locus of statewide conversations about the improvement of *Core Content* and *Program of Studies*, alignment of K-12 and higher education curricula and assessments, articulation of curricular opportunities, development of assessment items and possible scoring center development.

Initial costs associated with this work will be paid for from federal *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) resources to assist states with implementation of new testing requirements mandated by the United States Department of Education.

**Impact on Getting to Proficiency:**

Having the expertise to perform the psychometric activities associated with CATS within the state would be beneficial to the state economy and to the schools in terms of the availability of in-state technical assistance as they strive to reach proficiency.

**Contact Person:**

Gene Wilhoit, Commissioner  
Kentucky Department of Education  
502-564-3141  
gwilhoit@kde.state.ky.us

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**Commissioner of Education**

**Date:**

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